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DIRECT ACCESS UPDATE

We are working actively with CG-6 on the development and deployment of the next generation of our pay and personnel management information system. To date, we have delivered 10 Direct Access functional releases that have included a wide spectrum of complexity. Some of the functionality included self-service events like change of address, change of email address, allotments and view paycheck. In addition, there was functionality for military personnel assignments, leave reporting, reenlistment and separation intentions and some pay entitlements. With each software release we have moved closer to meeting our e-Coast Guard goal by moving more applications to the internet, thereby giving users the ability to access information from almost anyplace. We have not yet reached that goal, nor will we until we have included all CG units including underway units.

We, in partnership with CG-6, are now poised to deliver the 11th and most substantial release for Direct Access. Despite their importance and difficulty, these changes will not affect any self-service features. The changeover will occur after the end of month payroll processing on 22 September 2004, which means it will go live on 28 September. The major areas in this release involve changes to the system as run by yeomen such as PCS transfers, unauthorized absences, reserve orders, accessions, extension, reenlistments, separations and the remainder of the entitlements. Therefore, the focus for training will be our HR and pay experts in the yeoman community.

My staffs in COMDT (G-WRI) and at the Personnel Service Center (PSC) in Topeka are diligently working toward implementing Release 11 with as little disruption as possible. It is currently in testing and we are dedicating enormous effort to it. Our experience with previous Direct Access releases has taught us that we can never communicate and train enough. PSC is aggressively working a training plan from as many fronts as possible, including expert focus groups of senior yeomen brought to PSC to identify and test a full range of pay and HR scenarios; multiple iterations of parallel tests which compare actual payroll data with the test version to help ensure that everything is working properly; and full load tests which simulate what the expected usage of Direct Access will be. Initial performance testing was conducted in March using the Standard Workstation. The results showed no major impact to performance for the end user. We are coordinating future load testing with CG-6 to ensure that the final changes do not significantly impact end user performance. Over this summer, PSC will be conducting extensive field training through visits to units, on-site sessions at PSC, web-based learning using tutorials developed expressly for Direct Access, and distribution of CDs and other traditional training materials.

Every effort is being made to insure that there is no disruption to payroll as we implement Release 11. Once up, it should be transparent to users in the field. As I said, the major impact of this release from an implementation standpoint will be on yeomen in Servicing Personnel Offices. As with any new application, issues

will arise. My resources at PSC and COMDT (G-WRI) are ready to insure that when issues do arise, they are quickly addressed. This will be a big step forward for the Coast Guard. We will be retiring two legacy systems, SDAIL and PMIS . . . systems that have served the Coast Guard's HR business well. As we continue to automate, it is incumbent upon us all to recognize that it is the quality of the input to systems like Direct Access that ultimately drives the timeliness, quality of output, and service that personnel organizations like PSC can deliver.

I will continue communication either through ALCOAST, Flag Voice or tailored AIG messages as we progress through the final testing and training phase and get closer to going live in September.

Regards,

RADM Kenneth T. Venuto
Ken Venuto

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